

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANAMA 01197 01 OF 02 280559Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
EUR-12 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 DOE-15 SOE-02
/120 W

-----007862 280608Z /14

R 280404Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000
INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY SANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAMA 1197

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PEPR, XF, BA
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER'S VIEW OF AREA DEVELOPMENTS

1. SUMMARY. FOREIGN MINISTER ASKED TO SEE ME MAY 23 IN ORDER SHARE HIS VIEWS OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN MIDDLE EAST AND NEIGHBORING AREAS. AFTER AIRING HIS VIEWS ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS, HORN OF AFRICA, PDRY SITUATION, AFGHAN COUP, TROUBLES IN NORTH YEMEN AND IRAN FOREIGN MINISTER CONCLUDED THAT THERE ARE MORE MINUSES THAN PLUSES. HE URGED USG TO TAKE MORE FORCEFUL ACTION AGAINST SOVIET MOVES IN HORN AND TO MOVE RAPIDLY TO SETTLE ARAB-ISRAEL DISPUTE IN ORDER TO REMOVE CHANCES FOR SOVIET MEDDLING IN MIDDLE EAST ITSELF. END SUMMARY.

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2. FOREIGN MINISTER SHAIKH MUHAMMAD BIN MUBARAK ASKED TO SEE ME MAY 23 TO SHARE WITH ME HIS VIEWS ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN MIDDLE EAST AND NEIGHBORING AREAS. HE SAID DISTURBANCES IN IRAN ARE CAUSING GRAVE CONCERN ON THIS SIDE OF GULF. SHAH HAS MADE TACTICAL ERROR IN TRYING TO TACKLE BOTH LEFTIST AND RIGHTIST/RELIGIOUS OPPOSITION AT SAME TIME.

SHAIKH MOHAMMAD SAID HE FELT SHAH SHOULD HAVE "BOUGHT OFF" ONE GROUP UNTIL IT HAD BROUGHT OTHER UNDER CONTROL. PROSPECT MAY BE REMOTE, HE WENT ON, BUT EVEN REMOTE CHANCE THAT IRAN IS HEADED FOR CHAOS, WITH ALL THE OPPORTUNITY THIS WOULD GIVE SOVIETS, IS CAUSE FOR SLEEPLESS NIGHTS IN LITTLE GULF STATES.

3. RECENT COUP IN KABUL WAS SEEN BY SHAIKH MUHAMMAD AS PENULTIMATE STEP IN SOVIET SCHEME TO CREATE PUPPET REGIME THERE. HE SAID HE FOUND IT MOST SIGNIFICANT THAT COMMUNIST PARTY ITSELF HAD SEIZED POWER WITH ARMY SUPPORT RATHER THAN USUAL PATTERN IN WHICH ARMY SEIZES POWER FOR ITSELF GIVING ONLY LIP SERVICE TO ONE OR ANOTHER PARTY OR IDEOLOGY. SHAIKH MUHAMMAD SAID HE HAD BEEN FRIEND OF AFGHAN FOMIN IN REGIME PREVIOUS TO DAOUD'S AND HAD FOLLOWED EVENTS THERE CLOSELY. I BRIEFED HIM ON OUR VIEW OF SITUATION, DRAWING EXTENSIVELY ON STATE 118510. SHAIKH MUHAMMAD RESPONDED THAT USG POSITION SOUND IN THAT THERE IS LITTLE ELSE WE COULD DO BUT THAT HE HAD STRONG FEELING THAT SOVIETS NOT AS RELUCTANT NOW AS THEY MAY HAVE BEEN IN THE PAST TO BE SEEN PULLING THE STRINGS ON A PUPPET, PARTICULARLY IN COUNTRY WHICH BORDERS DIRECTLY ON USSR. HE CONCLUDED DISCUSSION OF THIS SUBJECT BY NOTING THAT FOR YEARS AFGHAN COLLEAGUES HAD

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BEEN TELLING HIM THAT THEY COULD KEEP COMMUNISTS UNDER CONTROL AND THAT THIS OR THAT COMMUNIST IN ARMY HAD BEEN PURGED. THEY HAD BEEN WRONG AND SOVIETS NOW HAVE AN AGENT THROUGH WHICH TO NEEDLE BOTH IRAN AND PAKISTAN.

4. FOREIGN MINISTER SEEMED WELL INFORMED ABOUT RECENT EVENTS IN NORTH YEMEN, AND I SHARED WITH HIM IN GENERAL TERMS CONTENTS SANA 2416. HE SAID HE HOPED AL-ALIM FLIGHT TO PDRY WAS GOOD SIGN FOR FUTURE STABILITY OF SANA REGIME BUT THAT IN YEMEN ONE CAN NEVER TELL. HE DID NOTE AS A GOOD SIGN RESTRAINT WITH WHICH AL-GHASMI HINDLED AFFAIR AND SAID HE HOPE THAT THIS WAS SIGN OF GREATER POLITICAL MATURITY AND LESS OF PAST TENDENCY TO REACH FOR THE GUNS AT THE SLIGHTEST PRETEXT. TURNING TO SITUATION IN PDRY, SHAIKH MUHAMMAD SAID SOVIETS HAD SIMPLY OUTBID

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MANAMA 1197

THE SAUDIS AND THERE WAS GROWING CONCERN IN THE
REGION, PARTICULARLY OF COURSE IN MUSCAT, THAT THE
DHOFAR WAR COULD BE RE-STARTED AT ALMOST ANY TIME.
PDRY HAD BECOME SOVIET CLIENT AND THERE WAS LITTLE
ARABS COULD DO ABOUT IT EXCEPT WATCH. AT THIS TIME
THERE IS NO POINT IN TRYING TO WEAN PDRY AWAY FROM
SOVIETS: PDRY LEADERS ARE STILL COLLEMTING THEIR
PAYOFF FROM MOSCOW FOR REJECTING RIYADH'S OVERTURES,
AND FOR BECOMING BASE FOR SOVIET EFFORTS IN THE HORN.
THIS PROCESS WOULD HAVE TO RUN ITS COURSE BEFORE
ANY NEW DIRECTION COULD EVEN BE CONSIDERED BY PDRY
LEADERS, OR INDUCED FROM OUTSIDE. (NOTE: RE STATE
131114, I EXPECT SHAIKH MUHAMMAD, WHEN HE LEARNS OF THIS
PROJECT, WILL FEEL THAT WE, LIKE SAUDIS, WILL BE
"TAKEN" BY PDRY REGIME).

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5. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID USG HELP FOR FRENCH AND
BELGIAN RESCUE EFFORT WAS A GOOD SIGN, ONE WHICH HE
HOPED WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY FIRMER USG ACTION AGAINST
SOVIET AND CUBAN ACTIVITY IN THE HORN. THE COMBINATION
OF EVENTS IN THE HORN, A COMMUNIST FOOTHOLD IN

ARABIAN PENINSULA ITSELF (PDRY) AND COMMUNIST COUP IN KABUL MAKES USG ACTION URGENT, IF ONLY TO REASSURE ITS FRIENDS IN THE AREA THAT THEIR FEARS ARE TAKEN SERIOUSLY IN WASHINGTON. HE CONTINUED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD AMERICAN CAUTION, AFTER VIETNAM, WHEN IT COMES TO INVOLVING U.S. ABROAD BUT THAT CAUTION IS BEING USED BY SOVIETS AGAINST KEY U.S. INTERESTS. USG MUST MOVE AGAINST SOVIETS OR SEE NUMBERS OF ITS FRIENDS IN THIS REGION BEGIN TO MOVE, HOWEVER RELUCTANTLY AND WARILY, TOWARD COMING TO TERMS WITH SOVIETS.

6. SHAIKH MUHAMMAD SAID SENATE VOTE ON PLANE SALES WAS, IN HIS MIND, A COMING OF AGE OF AMERICAN OPINION ABOUT MIDDLE EAST. SOME ARABS WILL STILL SEE PROCESS THROUGH WHICH SAUDIS "EARNED" THE AIRCRAFT AS DEMEANING BUT HE HAS COME TO FEEL THAT IT WAS WORTH IT: AN ARAB LOBBY HAS BECOME RESPECTABLE IN WASHINGTON AND THE ISRAELI LOBBY HAS LOST THE IMAGE OF INVINCIBILITY. NEXT STEP MUST BE FORCEFUL USG MOVE TO GET PEACE TALKS MOVING AGAIN. I EMPHASIZED TO HIM THAT USG IS AS COMMITTED AS EVER TO A MAXIMUM EFFORT TO ACHIEVE MIDDLE EAST PEACE BUT THAT OUR FRIENDS IN AREA MUST UNDERSTAND THAT IT CAN NOT BE DONE OVERNIGHT. SHAIKH MUHAMMAD SAID HE UNDERSTOOD NEED FOR PATIENCE BUT THAT ARAB FORCES WORKING AGAINST SADAT'S INITIATIVE ARE GAINING GROUND AND ISRAELIS SEEM TO MOVING FURTHER AND FURTHER FROM REALITY. CONFIDENTIAL

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USG MUST SOON GAIN ISRAELI ACCEPTANCE OF WHAT REST OF WORLD ACCEPTS AS REASONABLE INTERPRETATION OF RESOLUTION 242 OR GAME IS LOST. CLUVERIUS

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Message Attributes

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